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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 220746 TOSEC 260140

NODIS
FOR EAGLEBURGER FROM HABIB

E.O11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJECT: MIA

REF: PARIS 25889 (TOSEC 139

1. WE SUGGEST THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE ACTION IN RELEASEING 12 NAMES IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR US TO TAKE THE HEAT OFF ON THE UN MEMBERSHIP QUESTION WHICH IS THE DIRECT CAUSE OF THEIR ACTION. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT ACCEPT THIS MOVE AS SUFFICIENT IN ITSELF BUT SHOULD CONTINUE TO CONNECT THE VIETNAM INTEREST IN THE UN TO THE PROVISION OF AN ACCEPTABLE ACCOUNTING OF THE MIA.

2. ON THE ASSUMPTION THE SECRETARY ACCEPTS THIS GENERAL THESIS WE HAVE TWO IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS:

(A) WHAT TO SAY PUBLICLY, AND

(B) HOW TO RESPOND TO THE VIETNAMESE

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3. PUBLICLY, I SUGGEST PRESS SPOKESMAN SAY:

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BEGIN QUOTE

WE ARE PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED WHICH DEALS ONLY WITH A SMALL PORTION OF THE MANY HUNDREDS OF OUTSTANDING CASES OF MEN MISSING IN ACTION IN INDOCHINA. WE CALL UPON THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE AS FULL AN ACCOUNTING AS POSSIBLE FOR ALL OF OUR MISSING MEN WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY. THEY CLEARLY HAVE A CONTINUING OBLIGATION TO DO SO.
END QUOTE.

4. IF ASKED IF THE V.N. ACTION WILL AFFECT OUR VOTE AT THE UN, WE SUGGEST REPLYING: QUOTE I COULD NOT SPECULATE ON THAT. END QUOTE.

5. AS TO HOW TO DEAL WITH VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES, I SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING:

(A) HAVE OUR EMBASSY OFFICER IN PARIS WHO WAS GIVEN THE LIST GO BACK AND SAY WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE THE BODIES RETURNED, ASK WHEN AND HOW THAT CAN BE DONE, AND IF NO BODIES ARE AVAIL-ABLE ASK FOR SUCH DETAILS REGARDING THE MEN AS THE VIETNAMESE POSSESS.

(B) REQUEST THAT WALDHEIM -- WHO TALKED TO VIETNAMESE OBSERVER LAST WEEK -- GO BACK AND SAY THIS IS NOT ENOUGH AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED. IN HIS APPROACH WALDHEIM URGED THE VIETNAMESE TO QUOTE MAKE A GESTURE END QUOTE, AND HE MAY CONSIDER THE PRESENT ACTION ENOUGH, BUT WE SHOULD NOT LEAVE HIM UNDER THAT ILLUSION. ALTERNATIVELY, WE COULD HAVE USUN TAKE THIS ACTION DIRECTLY WITH VIETNAMESE OBSERVER MISSION.

(C) FINALLY, WE CAN LATER, IF WE CHOOSE, GO BACK TO THE VIETNAMESE THROUGH THE DIRECT CHANNEL IN PARIS AND MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND WHAT WE MEAN.

6. WE NEED YOUR URGENT RESPONSE ON THESE MATTERS.
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PRESS IS ALREADY QUERYING BROWN AND WE ARE HOLDING OFF COMMENT.

ROBINSON

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